

Remarks

By this amendment Claims 1, 11, 29, 33, and 37 are independent. Claims 10 and 12-16, 36, and new claim 39 are dependent on Claim 1. Claims 24, 28, 30, 31, and 32 are dependent on Claim 29. Claim 34 is dependent on Claim 33. It is believed that the claims as amended now define over the references of record and reconsideration of the rejection thereof is solicited. The Office Action noted that objections were made to the drawings, but no specific comments were present. It appeared to Applicant that the drawing were being objected to as being informal, a defect that can be cured after allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended to better define the safety feature of the invention requiring full insertion of the male prong in the receptacle before electrical contact is made. Applicant's simple, but highly effective technique positions the electrical contacts at a critical position at which an electrical connection only occurs upon full insertion of the male plug occurs into said contact slots. Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Simpson in view of Brothers, Simpson does not disclose the claimed plurality of electrical contacts having a pair of spaced conductive elements. Simpson further does not show the previously discussed safety feature of Claim 1 by positioning the contact slots at a location at which an electrical connection occurs when the plug is fully inserted. Instead, in Fig. 16, Simpson requires a relatively complicated and impractical system by which the presence or absence of notches at the end of each prong are sensed to activate a plug header. The Simpson patent does not contemplate that the safety feature operates when the prongs are inserted into the slots formed by U-

shaped contacts as recited. Thus, the system of Simpson is neither efficient nor economical solution to the serious safety hazard as discussed, and requires special modified plugs not normally found in a household. Although Brothers was cited to allegedly show the claimed u-shaped contact slots, the reference fails to show the claimed safety feature. Thus, Claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 10 and 12-16 are dependent on Claim 1 and further define means for releasably locking the prongs. Claim 10 and 12-16 are also in condition for allowance.

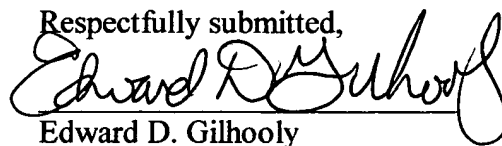
Claim 11 includes the limitations of previous Claim 1 and 10 and further defines that the contacts have an edge with cut-out portion to provide clearance between a locking ball and the contact. It is submitted that none of cited patents including Ursich include such a feature, and Claim 11 is allowable.

Claim 29 has been amended to define that the actuator member includes an actuator element moveable along a first axis and a block disposed laterally of said actuator element and formed with a slot for urging the locking element into a hole of a prong. Claim 29 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ursich. It is submitted that Ursich does not show the claimed actuator member. Ursich uses an actuator with an enlarged end. Such structure as in Ursich limits the distance from the prong holes that the actuator may be located that can cause problems of clearance between the actuator and inserted male plug in the presence of different designs and sizes of male plugs that can be solved by the claimed actuator capable of greater spacing. In addition, the use of the block in the actuator member of Claim 29 provides a more firm and positive locking action than is present in Ursich. Thus, Claim 29 and Claims 24, 28, 30, 31 and 32 dependent thereon are in allowable condition.

Claim 33 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of previously submitted Claim 29. In addition, it is now recited that the exteriorly accessible actuator has means to permit clearance with an inserted plug by virtue of being oval in cross-section. A particular problem associated with a lockable receptacle such as shown by Ursich is that particularly large male plugs can depress the actuator when the plug is inserted so withdrawal of the plug in its locked configuration can be very difficult. The oval configuration of Claim 33 allows for additional clearance in the presence of bulky type male plugs found in certain designs. The shape of the actuator in the Farnworth patent as previously applied to Claim 33 has nothing to do with clearance as in Applicant's Claim 33. The actuator of Farnworth is depressed when a plug is inserted and is releasable by other means. The only shape consideration important to Farnworth is what configuration could be best depressed by contact with the plug being inserted. The oval shape of Claim 33 is not present for aesthetical reasons, but is provided to solve the foregoing problem of clearance.. For these reasons, Claim 33 and Claim 34 dependent thereon are in condition for allowance.

Claim 37 was indicated to contain allowable subject matter and has been rewritten in independent form to be in allowable condition.

Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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